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Two Versions of the Coptic Psalter.

J. DYNELEY PRINCE, PH.D.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY.

IN 1897, the text of a Psalter in the Upper Egyptian or Sahidic dialect was published by E. A. Wallis Budge without notes or comment other than a brief introduction. This is the only complete version of the Psalms in Sahidic. Previous to its publication, the Sahidic Psalter was known merely in a fragmentary form.¹ Budge's work is the edition of an unilluminated papyrus manuscript of 156 leaves (Pap. Codex Orient. 5000, Brit. Museum) which was discovered by natives in 1895, together with a book of ten homilies, in the ruins of an ancient Coptic Church and Monastery in Upper Egypt. The books were found bound in leather within a buried stone coffer. The exact date of this Sahidic Psalter is indeterminable, but its general style, size, and shape lead the editor to place the most ancient parts of it not later than the end of the seventh Christian century and not earlier than the end of the sixth century A.D. The Ms. was evidently repaired at a date somewhat later than the time when the oldest portions of it were written. This text is evidently the *second* oldest known Coptic Psalter.² Since its appearance, Alfred Rahlfs has edited in the *Abhandlungen der kön. Ges. der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, New Series, IV. 4 (1901), fragments of still another version of the Psalter in Sahidic taken from a papyrus in the Berlin Museum.³ There is every reason to believe that this Berlin Ms. is older than Budge's text, although both versions are textually practically identical in all essential points. Rahlfs regards the Berlin Ms. as a production of the fifth century A.D., reasoning

¹ For a list of extant Coptic Mss., cf. Hyvernat, *Revue Biblique Internationale*, 1896, nr. 4, pp. 540 ff. See especially Ciasca, *Sacr. Bibl. Fragm. Copto-Sahidica*, Rome, i. (1885), ii. (1889); and Lagarde, *Egyptiaca*, pp. 65 ff.

² The title is: *The Earliest Known Coptic Psalter*, by E. A. Wallis Budge, London, 1898. For a review, see Luzac's *Oriental List*, ix., p. 904.

³ *Die Berliner Handschrift des Sahidischen Psalters*, Berlin (*Weidmann'sche Buchhandlung*), 1901.

chiefly from the very archaic form of the consonant *Šima*, which closely approaches the original Demotic sign, from which *Šima* was developed. The only other place where *Šima* appears in this form is in the ancient Akhmim papyrus "The Apocalypse of Elias," published in *Texte u. Untersuchungen*, New Series, II. 3a. It is evident, therefore, if this conclusion be correct, that Rahlfs' version represents fragments of the earliest known Coptic Psalter. Budge's text, however, being complete, is of course of greater value for purposes of comparative criticism. Rahlfs' work can therefore be used only to supplement and occasionally to correct Budge's rather hastily edited material. It would perhaps not be too daring to suggest a connection between the Berlin fragments and the supposed version of the fourth century A.D. contemporaneous with St. Pachomius.⁴

The Sahidic dialect,⁵ in which Rahlfs' and Budge's versions of the Psalter are written, was probably in early times the language only of the region about Thebes. Later, this idiom undoubtedly spread all over Upper Egypt, from Minyeh to the Nubian border. Makrizi, the Arab historian who lived at the beginning of the fifteenth century A.D., alludes to Sahidic as the primitive source of the Coptic language,⁶ and that from which the northern Boheiric dialect was derived. While there can be no doubt that Boheiric is linguistically later than Sahidic, as will be evident from the following comparisons, it is not impossible that instead of being actually a derivative from an early Sahidic stock, it is rather the later development, tainted by Hellenic influence, of an older extinct northern dialect.

The "Orthodox Coptic Church of St. Mark" of Egypt (Arabic: *elkenise elmarqustye elqibtīye elortodokstīye*) uses at the present day a version of the Psalter which, like all the biblical texts and services of this communion, is in the Boheiric or northern Egyptian dialect of Coptic. This idiom seems to have been originally the language of only the environs of Alexandria, but it soon became the tongue of all Lower Egypt, and eventually, as a literary vehicle, displaced even its powerful rival the Upper Egyptian Sahidic, although the latter lived on as a spoken language after the Boheiric had passed from

⁴ See Forbes Robinson in Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, i., pp. 677-671.

⁵ Arab. *es-Sahid* (also *es Sa'id*) 'Upper Egypt.' There are a few apparent points of contact in both Rahlfs' and Budge's text with Akhmimic and occasionally even with Boheiric, but these must be studied with care, as they may really be Sahidic phenomena.

⁶ See Quatremère, *Recherches sur la langue et la littérature de l'Égypte*, Paris, 1808, p. 42.

the mouths of the people. The Boheiric remains to-day, however, the official idiom of the Coptic Church all over Egypt, although its present pronunciation in Upper Egypt still retains much of the earlier Sahidic peculiarities. On the other hand, the pronunciation of the church language in the Delta has assumed a number of distinctively Neo-Hellenic characteristics. The official Boheiric version of the Psalter as now in current use in Coptic churches has been printed in an excellent edition under the auspices of the reigning Orthodox Patriarch, Cyril the Fifth, dated 1613 *Anno Martyrum*.⁷ This volume consists of two parts separately paged, *i.e.*, the Psalms, pp. 1-318, and "the Canticles of the Prophets" (extracts from various Scriptural books), pp. 1-71.⁸ In both these sections the Coptic text and the literal Arabic translation appear in parallel columns.

The object of the present treatise is merely to illustrate, by means of a few excerpts from the first three psalms in both these Coptic translations, the amount of textual differentiation and dialectic variation between the ancient Sahidic version as published by Budge and supplemented by Rahlfs' older fragments, and the current Boheiric text of the Orthodox Coptic Church. The absolute dependence of both the Sahidic and the Boheiric translations on the LXX, characteristic of all Coptic versions of the O.T., will be apparent from the following few tabulations.

As there is unfortunately no font of Coptic type in this country, I have been compelled to use the Greek alphabet with certain modifications to represent the Coptic text in this article. The following changes in the Greek characters should be observed: Coptic *Sima* is represented by σ (final ς), *Fii* by Φ, *Kii* by χ, *Sai* by ϣ̣ (final ϣ̣), *Fai* by φ, *Chai* by χ̣, *Hori* by the rough breathing ̣, *Ganga* by ζ, *Šima* by ϣ̣̣, and *Di* by ϣ̣̣̣. An accent over a consonant, as ῑ, indicates the presence of a short *e*-vowel.

⁷ The Coptic "Era of the Martyrs" (Arab. *senet eš-Šuhada*), used officially by the Church, begins with the accession of the persecuting Diocletian, 284 A.D.

⁸ The Coptic title of the Boh. version is Πζώμ ντε νιψαλμος ντε Δαυιδ πιπροΦητης ουο' πιουρο νεμ νι'ωδη, 'The Book of the Psalms of David the Prophet and King, and the Canticles.' The best European editions of the Psalms are those of Ideler, *Psalterium Coptice*, Berlin, 1837; Schwartz, *Psalt. in Dialectum Memphiticum translatum*, Leipzig, 1843; Lagarde, *Psalterii Versio Memphitica*, Göttingen, 1875, unfortunately in Roman characters.

Ancient Sahidic Version.	Current Boheiric.	LXX.
Ψ I.		
1 ^a . ετε ἔπε φβωκ ἰμ πσοῖνε ἵνασεβης.	ετε μεφεόσε ἔχεν πσο- κῶνι ντε νιάσεβης.	οὐκ ἐπορεύθη ἐν βουλῇ ἀσεβῶν.
2 ^b . αυω φναμελετα ἔπεφνοσμῶς ἔπε'ου μὲν τευσῆ.	εφεερμελεταν ἔχεν πεφ- νομος μεπεί'ου νεμ πι- εζωρ'.	καὶ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ αὐτοῦ μελετήσῃ ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός.
3 ^b . εννεφκῶβε νασροφ- ρεφ αν. ὡβ νιμ ετ- φνααα νασοουτν.	ουο' ουζῶβι ἵναφ ἵνεσ- φορφερ. ὡβ νιβεν εσαφαιτου ὁσαφντιμαντι νχητου.	καὶ τὸ φύλλον αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἀπορῥύσεται. καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἂν ποιῇ κατευ- οδωθήσεται.
4 ^b . αλλα ευναῖθε ἔπεσο- εἰς εἶσαρε πτην θλοφ εβολ 'εζῖμ π'ο ἔμκα'.	αλλα ἔμφρηντι μεπρησι εἶσαρε πθηου νε'φ εβολ 'εζῖν π'ο ἔμκα'ι.	ἀλλ' ἡ ὥς ο ἡνοῦς ὅν ἐκρίπτει ὁ ἀνεμος ἀπὸ προσώπου τῆς γῆς.
5. ἵν τσυναγωγῇ ἵνδι- καιος.	ἔχεν πσοκῶνι ντε νιμμη.	ἐν βουλῇ δικαίων.
Ψ II. Heading:		
Τωδῇ ἵναδανειδ.	Τω Δανιδ. ἵντι προ- φητια εθβε νιμκαν' ἵντε Πχς.	No equivalent.
1 ^a . αυῖσε ἵν'ητ.	Αυῖς εβολ.	ἐφρύαξαν.
2 ^a . αυω αναρχων.	Ουο' νικεαρχων	καὶ οἱ ἀρχοντες.
2 ^b . Ends verse with Διαψαλμα.	Lacking.	Lacking.
6. ανοκ δε αυκαθιστα ἔμμοι ἵνρο εβολ'ι τοοτφ.	ανοκ δε αφα'οι ερατ ἵνουρο εβολ'ι τοοτφ.	ἐγὼ δὲ κατεστάθην βα- σιλεὺς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ.
7. εἰζῶ μεπουε'σα'νε ἔμψοεις.	εἰωῖς ἔμπισα'σα'νι ἵντε Πῶς.	διαγγέλλων τὸ πρό- σταγμα κυρίου.
8. αιτι ἔμμοῦν ἁντινακ.	αριετιν ἵντο ἵναντινακ.	αἰτῆσαι παρ' ἐμοῦ καὶ δώσω σοι.
11. αρι'μ'αλ μεψοεις ἵν ου'οτε ἵντεντεληλ ναφ ἵν ουστωτ.	αριβωκ μεΠῶς ἔχεν ου- 'οῦντι. Ουο' θεληλ ναφ ἔχεν ουσθερτερ.	δουλεύσατε τῷ κυρίῳ ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε αὐτῷ ἐν τρόμῳ.
12. Kῶλξ τηυτν ἵντε- σβω μεποτε ἵντε πῶεις νουκῶς ντεν'ε εβολ'ι τε'ιη ἵντεφ μντμε.	αμονι ἵνουσβ μεπερχας ἵντε Πῶς ἔχωντ ουο' ἵντετεν- τακο εβολ'ι ἀφμωιτ ντε ἵντιμεθμη.	δράξασθε παιδείας μή- ποτε ὀργισθῇ κύριος καὶ ἀπολείσθε ἐξ ὁδοῦ δι- καίας.
εἶσαν μεφκῶωντ μου' ἵν ουκῶεπη ναῖατου ἵνουον νιμ ετκω ἵντην εροφ.	εἶσωπ ἀρεσαν μεφζῶωντ μο' ἵνωλεμ. Ἰουνιατου ἵνουον νιβεν ετέθηου χη εροφ.	ὅταν ἐκκαυθῇ ἐν τάχει ὁ θυμὸς αὐτοῦ μακάριοι πάντες οἱ πεποιοῦντες ἐπ' αὐτῷ.
Ψ III.		
2. οὐν 'α' ζῶ ἔμμος ἵναψυχη φε μντφουζαι ἔμμαι ἵνα'ρμ μεφνοντε Διαψαλμα.	ουον ουμης ζῶμμος ἵνα- ψυχη ζε ἔμμον ουζαι ὅσο ναφ ἔχεν μεφΝουῦντι.	πολλοὶ λέγουσι τῇ ψυχῇ μου. Οὐκ ἔστι σωτηρία αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ θεῷ αὐτοῦ.
8. Παπῶεις πε πουζαῖ αυω μεκουως εζῖμ μεκλαος.	Φα Πῶς πε πιουζαῖ ουο' μεφσμου εζῖν μεφλαος.	τοῦ κυρίου ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν λαόν σου ἡ εὐλογία σου.

COMMENTARY.

Psalm i. has the heading in Cod. D,⁹ but in neither of our texts: *επζωκ εβολ πιψαλμος ιντε Δαυιδ* (also *δαδ*) *πίονιτ στυχος ιε*. The numeral fifteen *ιε* denotes the number of verses. It is spelled out in one Ms. This heading is not found even in Cod. C. Its Heb. rendering would be *למנצח מזמור לדוד האחד*. The words *επζωκ εβολ* 'to the going forth' are universally used in Coptic to translate LXX *εις τὸ τέλος*. The verse numbering of B differs entirely from that of S, which practically agrees with that of the ordinary LXX text. Thus, in *ψ* i. B gives seven and in *ψ* ii. nine verses, in contrast with S, which gives six (so LXX and M) in *ψ* i. and twelve (so LXX and M) in *ψ* ii. Cod. D divides *ψ* i. into fifteen and *ψ* ii. into twenty verses.

i. 1^a. Both S *βωκ ιμ* and B *σε χεν* are more exact equivalents of M *ב בלל* than LXX *επορεύθη εν*. For B *πσοκῶνι*, Cod. C has *πεφσοκῶνι*, and for B *ασεβης*, C has *ασεβες* (elsewhere *εσεβες*). S *μπεφνοσμοσ* is clearly a scribal error for *νομος*.

i. 2^b. Note that S and B prefer to use the Gk. *μελετα* 'consider' rather than the usual Sah. *ῥροονς* and B *βιλαονς* respectively. Ideler's *εφιερμελεταν* is not so good as in B.

i. 3^b. Ideler omits *ονο* here. Note S *Šima* = B *Ganga* in *κσωβεζωβι*. This is a common interchange. May one not be tempted to regard constructions like B *ουζωβι ινταφ* 'the leaf belonging to him' for 'his leaf,' as having influenced the common modern Egyptian Arabic usage *el beyt beta'o* 'the house belonging to him' for simple *beyto* 'his house'? Rahlfs' reading *εννεφκῶβς* here is inexplicable. He adds in a note that the *Šima* is clear, only the superior line being doubtful. The occurrence of *Šima* in this word must be regarded as a scribal error for *ε*. Note the Sah. metathesis *ροφρεφ* (so also Rahlfs) for B *φορφερ* *cadere, decidere* (M *יבול* 'wither'). S *ετφνααν* 'those things which he doeth' is better than B *εσαφαιτον* 'those things which he seeketh' (Gk.); cf. LXX *ὅσα ἂν ποιῇ*. B *σαφντιμαντι* 'he shall prosper in them' is also less accurate than S *νασουντι* 'they (the things) shall stand upright,' i.e., 'prosper' (M *יצליח*).

i. 4^b. S *εναρθε* 'they shall be like' (*ρ + θε = τ'ε*). S *δοεις* 'dust' and 'contagion.' B uses no verb, but leaves the copula understood with *μΦρηγι* (Cod. C has *ρσι*). S *θλοφ* 'causes to fly, scatters by

⁹ The abbreviations S and B = Budge's text and the Boheiric, respectively. C and D are references to Boheiric codices.

blowing,' and B νε'φ εβολ 'scatters' have slightly more the sense of M תפני than of LXX ἐκρίπτει 'casts forth.' Rahlfs' text here is identical with S.

i. 5. Note how S prefers the Greek words. Fragments in Rahlfs also show the word [τ]σ[v]ν[α]γω[γγ].

ii. It is highly interesting to observe that we find in B τω Δαυιδ, clearly a corrupt abbreviation of S Τωδὴ ἸΔαυειδ 'the hymn of David.' The Arabic translator of B evidently regarded τω here as a particle of possession like φα 'of or belonging to,' as he renders simply *l'Daud*. The last part of B's heading of ψ ii., 'a prophecy concerning the sorrows of the Messiah' (μκαυ' pl. of μκα'), is given also by Ideler after the words πψαλμος ἵτε Δαυιδ 'a psalm of David.' Cod. D has simply ὡτιπροφητια εθβε Πχς 'a prophecy concerning the Messiah.'

ii. 1^a. The Sah. version translates ἐφρούαξαν ('they snort, act insolently') by the pregnant phrase 'they lift up the heart.' B is closer to LXX, as ως εβολ means properly 'cry out.' M נשׂו means rather 'they rush together excitedly.'

ii. 2^a. S αναρχων is an unusual writing for ἡαρχων 'the rulers' (cf. ανλαος ii. 1^b), but it is an exact translation of LXX. B has νικεαρχων 'the other (-κε-) rulers.' This rendering has the support of C and D.

ii. 2^b. Note that S ends with διαψαλμα, which is lacking elsewhere.

ii. 6. Both versions render literally 'as for me they (indef. 'one') have appointed me (B αφτα'οι ερατ 'constituted me') for a king by his hand,' i.e., 'through him.' This is the usual periphrasis of the passive (κατεστήθην). Ideler gives ἵουρο without the indefinite article ον; cf. Boh. ἵουουρο and Sah. ἵρρο 'for a king.' Cod. D renders here ανοκ δε α πκσς τα'οι ερατ 'the Lord has appointed me,' contrary to the Greek and Hebrew. The authorized Arabic version also has *aqāmnī er-Rabb*. The Arabic translation of B, however, renders literally, 'I was appointed king.' Rahlfs' version has μμοει for μμοῖ. The diphthong ει appears practically throughout his text for ἱ.

ii. 7. S εἰζω 'I saying' (*casus pendens*) is a better equivalent for LXX διαγγέλλων than B εἰωις 'in order to announce.'

ii. 8. In S, the reading αιτι μμοῦν ἀντινακ cannot be correct, owing to the difference in person, αιτι μμοῦν 'seek them,' i.e., 'those things.' The correct reading, as already indicated by the unusual diaeresis over the ον must be αιτι μμοῖ 'seek from me.' The form μμοῦν probably depends on a defective copying, influenced in some degree by

the preceding *ῥποου* 'to-day' in verse 7. The form *αν̄τινακ* must be an error for *ταν̄τινακ* 'and I give thee' (so B with prefixed *ν*, *νταν̄τινακ*, *i.e.*, the conjunctive; see Steindorff, Gr. §§ 257 ff.). Rahlfs' text here reads [*αιτει ῥ*](*μο*)*ει τ(α)ν̄τινακ*, which gives the key to correct Budge's version. Cf. LXX *καὶ δώσω*, but M *וְאֶתְּנָה* 'that I may give thee'; so V *ut dem*. Both S, when amended as indicated, and B are exact renderings of LXX in this passage.

I give the entire text of ii. 11-12 as being of interest in connection with this difficult passage. These verses are lacking in Rahlfs' version.

ii. 11. S *ν̄τεν̄τελεηλ*, B *ουο̄ θεληλ* are probably loan words from Heb. *לֵהֵל* (?).

ii. 12. S *κ̄σλξ̄ τηυτ̄ν ν̄τεσβω*, B *αμονι ν̄ουσβω*, LXX *δράξασθε παιδείας* = M *נִשְׁקֵן בָּר*. Note that in 11-12 in B there is no sign for the 2 p. pl. until 12, *ν̄τεν̄τακο* 'ye shall perish.' In S, however, the 2 p. is represented in each imperative except *αρῑμ̄αλ*. S *κ̄σλξ̄*, B *αμονι* = *adprehendere*. There is no help to be got from these texts towards the interpretation of the passage. They simply follow LXX, which simply represents an original *קָחוּ בְמוֹסֵר* (see Prince, JBL., 1899, pp. 1-3).

S again prefers the Gk. form *μηποτε* to Sah. *μέσακ* 'lest.' B uses its own form *μπερχας* 'lest.'

S *ε̄ρσαν* often means 'whenever,' as here, but usually 'if.' B *ε̄σωπ αρεσαν* (Ideler better *ερεσαν*) 'if, perchance' is not so good an equivalent of *ε̄σαν* as is S.

Cod. D adds *ουο̄* wrongly here before *ν̄χωλεμ*, and in Cod. C *χη* is lacking.

iii. 2. S *φε* is undoubtedly a clerical error for *ζε* 'that' (conj.). In *μν̄τφοῡξαι* the negative should be *μ̄ν̄φ*; lit. 'not is salvation there' (*μμαν*). LXX *αὐτῷ* is apparently not represented; *ἐν τῷ θεῷ αὐτοῦ* is rendered by S 'before (*ννᾱρμ̄*) his God.' S *διαψαλμα* (also Rahlfs) is not found in the other Mss. B is a literal translation of LXX here.

iii. 8. S keeps the 2 p. correctly here, *πεκουω̄ς* 'thy blessing,' *πεκλαος* 'thy people'; but note B *πεφσμον* 'his blessing,' *πεφλαος* 'his people.'

A complete collation of Budge's Psalter with the other Coptic versions, both Sahidic and Boheiric, would be of considerable value from a text-critical point of view. As will be observed from the examples here given, the ancient Sahidic translation is evidently a rendering quite independent of the current Boheiric version. This

Sahidic Psalter, as represented by both Budge's and Rahlfs' Mss., contains a number of differences in the Psalm headings and frequent variations in the text itself, showing that it must have had for its basis a Ms. of the LXX differing in many important particulars from that followed by the current Boheiric rendering.